

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T BEIRUT 5299

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI PINS PINT LE IS SY

SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON: COMMENTS ON MAJOR HADDAD

1. CECIL HOURANI, FORMER POLITICAL ADVISER TO PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA, CAME TO SEE ME SEPTEMBER 11 TO REPORT ON A RECENT VISIT TO MARJAYOUN, WHERE HE HAD SEVERAL CONVERSATIONS WITH MAJOR HADDAD. HE AGREED WITH ISRAELI CLAIM THAT HADDAD IS ONLY 75PCT. UNDER THEIR CONTROL, AND SAID WE MUST KNOW HIS BACKGROUND TO UNDERSTAND HIS ATTITUDES. HADDAD WAS FROM A VERY MODEST FAMILY AND SAID HE HAD ALWAYS FELT AN OUTSIDER FROM THE TIME HE ENTERED THE LEBANESE MILITARY ACADEMY AND FOUND HIMSELF AMONG A GROUP OF MEN FROM SOCIAL BACKGROUNDS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM HIS. HADDAD CLAIMED THAT THE LEBANESE ARMY HAD INHERITED THE TRADITIONS OF THE FRENCH ARMY BEFORE 1940, AND OFFICERS TREATED ENLISTED MEN LIKE DIRT. HE HAD GONE TO THE ACADEMY WITH PEOPLE LIKE JOHNNY ABDO AND COL.

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SECRET

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 05299 130847Z

FARHAT, ONE-TIME LIAISON OFFICER AT NAKOURA WHO HAS NOW DISAPPEARED ON SOME TRAINING ASSIGNMENT, AND DID NOT TRUST ANY OF THEM. THEY WERE NOT SERIOUS. NEITHER WAS THE GOL.

2. HADDAD HAD BEEN GENUINELY CONVINCED LEBANESE ARMY HAD CHOSEN TO GO THROUGH MARJAYOUN AREA BECAUSE OF SYRIAN PRESSURE AND WHOLE PURPOSE OF EXERCISE WAS TO GET RID OF HADDAD AND SHIDIAK AND CLOSE

GOOD FENCE. HOURANI COMMENTED THAT, OF COURSE, CLOSURE OF GOOD FENCE WAS IMPOSSIBLE, AT LEAST UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

3. HOURANI SAID HADDAD WAS A HERO TO HIS MEN BECAUSE HE MIXED WITH THEM ON A BASIS OF EQUALITY. HE WAS A VERY INTELLIGENT OFFICER WHO FELT HE WAS DOING HIS DUTY. HIS PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE WAS TO KEEP THE SYRIANS AND THE PALESTINIANS OUT OF THE AREA HE CONTROLLED. HE ALSO APPARENTLY HAD HAD HELD OUT TO HIM THE IDEA THAT IF WORST CAME TO WORST, AN INDEPENDENT CHRISTIAN STATE MIGHT BE DECLARED IN SOUTH LEBANON. IT WAS AFTER ALL THE LAST AREA OF LEBANON FREE FROM BOTH SYRIANS AND PALESTINIANS.

4. HOURANI HAD COUNSELLED HADDAD TO SEEK PRAGMATIC WORKING ARRANGEMENTS WITH UNIFIL AND TO LET THEM COME INTO THE AREA HE CONTROLLED. HADDAD SAID HE HAD RECENTLY MADE AN AGREEMENT WITH THEM GRANTING FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND ESTABLISHMENT OF UNIFIL OFFICES IN VARIOUS PLACES INCLUDING MARJAYOUN.

5. HOURANI NOTED THAT HADDAD AND HIS MEN HAD NOT BEEN PAID FOR SOME THREE MONTHS. (DAO REPORTS THEY WERE LAST PAID JULY 21.) PERHAPS THIS WAS SIMPLY BUREAUCRATIC DELAY, BUT HADDAD HAD SAID THAT IF GOL WISHED TO DRIVE HIM INTO ARMS OF ISRAELIS, THIS WAS ONE WAY TO DO IT. I SAID HADDAD HAD PRETTY MUCH BURNED HIS BRIDGES BY FIRING ON HIS OWN ARMY, AND I FOUND IT INCONCEIVABLE THAT GOL WOULD AGREE TO PAY HIM. HOURANI SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT, BUT WHAT ABOUT HIS MEN? I SAID IT WAS HIS MEN WHO HAD BEEN PULLING THE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 05299 130847Z

TRIGGERS, AND I THOUGHT GOL PROBABLY TOOK A PRETTY DIM VIEW OF THEM. I SUGGESTED HE DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH BOUTROS.

6. HOURANI SAID HADDAD CLAIMED HE HAD AT NO TIME ACCEPTED THE OFFER MADE TO HIM BY LEBANESE, EVEN THOUGH HE SAID IT WAS VERY TEMPTING. (HADDAD TOLD HOURANI HE HAD BEEN OFFERED A POST ABROAD AND \$200,000.)

7. COMMENT: HOURANI IS AN INTELLIGENT OBSERVER WHO COMES FROM MARJAYOUN. ALTHOUGH HE HAS BEEN SYMPATHETIC TO HADDAD AND HAS NOT ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE MILITARY SITUATION, I SUSPECT HIS OBSERVATIONS ABOUT HADDAD'S OUTLOOK ARE VALID. WE SUSPECT, HOWEVER, THAT ISRAELIS COULD EXERT MORE CONTROL OVER HIM ON SUCH MATTERS AS THE ENTRY OF LEBANESE FORCES INTO THE SOUTH IF THEY REALLY WANTED TO. THERE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A COINCIDENCE OF HADDAD'S VIEWS AND BENGAL'S ON OPPOSING THAT ENTRY. IF BENGAL HAD WANTED THE LEBANESE AT TIBNIN, HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE HADDAD WOULD HAVE GONE ALONG.
PARKER

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